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A

WORD

To the Approaching

Parliament of England,

FOR THE

SETTLEMENT

OF THE

NATION.

Printed in the Year 1679.

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PARLIAMENT.

O W glorious are thy works, O Lord! the Prophet cryed out, in the Tranſports of his Admiration, which the ſight of ſo many great wonders and incomparable pieces of Workmanſhip, of which the world is full, cauſed in him. He could not but wonder to behold ſo great a number of Creatures, their Beauty, their Riches, and their differing Qualities. Nor was the magnificence of this goodly ſight, the onely reaſon of his Exclamation; the addition which he makes (*Thou haſt made all things in Wiſdom*) ſhews, That he was equally raviſhed at the miraculous Order that the Creator had eſtabliſhed among them. For if after the production of ſo much variety, there had not been an orderly Government of the whole, the World, which was to be a work of perfection, and made to ſhew the perfection of the Architect, would have been nothing but a heap of diſorder and confuſion.

If then this Order, without which the World would have proved a meer Chaos, appear to be ſo lovely and ſo admirable, the deep contrivance which the wiſdom of God found out to eſtabliſh it in the Univerſe, is no leſs to be admired and wondered at by all Mankind. For he made the Creatures unequal in their perfection, to the end the leſs perfect ſhould be beholding and dependant upon the more excellent; and to each he allotted a place proper for the degree of his perfection. For that reaſon he plac'd the Sun in the higheſt Heavens, to the end it might diſtribute its light to all the parts of the lower world, that its reviving heat might contribute to the growth, increaſe, nouriſhment, and preſervation of Plants, Animals, and Men, and every year renew the Earth by the influences of his beams.

God has obſerved the ſame Celeſtial management in reſpect of men. They are born with various endowments, both of their parts and endowments, he hath raiſed ſome above others; and has ordered the preſervation, repoſe, and happineſs of men whom he has ſubjected, to depend upon the continual cares and vigilant toyls of them whom he has appointed to be Governours. So that we may ſay, that as the Sun is the eye that gives us the ſight of all things, and without which our Eyes would be abſolutely unprofitable: A King is in the ſame manner the Eye of his Kingdom; the Eye from whence the Subjects continually receive their ſight, and without which they would not be able to avoid the Precipices of Confuſion.

It is this Order proceeding from the wiſdom of God, that has ſubjected the Multitude to one Man; which *Plato* himſelf acknowledges, (*Dial de Reg.*) when he wiſhes, *That as God is the onely Governour of the world, ſo all men were under the Government of one ſingle King. Mankind*, (ſaith he) *will never be certainly and perfectly happy, till they come under the Government of one ſingle Monarch; all the cauſes of War ſhall then ceaſe. No longer then ſhall Intereſt, Ambition, Jealouſie, arm Soveraigns one againſt another; nor the fields be covered with Armed Multitudes, breathing nothing but each others deſtruction. Then ſhall no more be heard the loud complaints of people bewailing the ſeverity of Tyrannizing Dominion: No longer would the wicked, the perfidious, the Villainous, find ſhelter and ſanctuary in Forraign Dominions; but ſo many different Nations would become one Family, under one tender and indulgent King and Father.*

But God has not been contented onely to tye Subjects to their Soveraigns by the intereſt which obliges them to remain in their Obedience; for he, well knowing the blindneſs and

inconſtancy of Men, fore-ſaw that ſuch a tye would prove too weak and ſlender; and therefore he engaged them to Submiſſion out of Conſcience; and has made the obligation of being Obedient to Kings, a Religious Duty. He has alſo ſo expreſly and clearly ſet forth this Duty in ſo many places of Scripture, that it is apparent, that it ſeems thereby to have been the full deſign of his Divine Will, to take away all pretences whatever that might be made uſe of for the violation thereof. Having above all things declared, (*1 Pet. c. 2.*) That neither the evil Inclinations or bad Qualities of Soveraigns, nor the Severity of their Government, are of ſufficient force to free the Subjects from their Loyalty. And this poſitive Declaration was abſolutely neceſſary, in regard that the Fidelity which binds them to their Lawful Princes, being the onely cauſe of the Tranquillity of Kingdoms and Empires, if God had left them at their Liberty to withdraw themſelves from their Subjection upon ſuch or ſuch occaſions, he had expoſed the Kingly Government to the Injuſtice and raſhneſs of every hair-brain'd Judgment, and their Kingdomes to all the miſeries of ſuddain Reſolutions. And if he had not eſtabliſhed Obedience to Princes by a peculiar Law, Kings could not eaſily be aſſur'd of the Obedience and Loyalty of their Subjects, becauſe the humours of Men are ſubject to change, and Levity is natural to Mankind: as alſo by reaſon of the variety of Intereſts that carry them, which are ſo powerful, that they are hardly able to anſwer for themſelves. Now this Fidelity thus explain'd, is an obligation which God impoſes upon us, which no intereſt ought to weaken, and with which no Authority can diſpence.

Some there are, that queſtion how Subjects are to behave themſeves, when Kings in their Treaties violate the Fundamental Laws of Monarchy. As for example, what the *French* were to have done, if *Francis* the Firſt had been obſtinate to perform the Treaty which he made at *Madrid*, by which he had engaged himſelf to deliver up the Poſſeſſion of *Burgundy* to *Charles* the Fifth. To this, one of the moſt knowing and accompliſhed Politicians of our Age makes anſwer, That in ſuch caſes as theſe, it ſhould be the firſt attempt of the Subjects to labour to perſwade the Prince from his Intention, by Petitions and Remonſtrances. To which if the King give no regard, what can the Subject do, ſaith he, but receive his Commands and his Orders, and forbear to put them in execution? Thus did the *French* behave themſelves in reference to *Francis* the Firſt. Afterwards he adds, that ſhould it happen, as it is not altogether impoſſible, that he ſhould attempt by force, what he could not get by fair means; what ſhall they do in ſuch a ſtrange caſe? Shall they give way to that violence that threatens to over-whelm them? Or ſhall they take up Arms to repel it? Which ſhall they ſide withal? Submiſſion or Reſiſtance? Deſert the good of the King, or make a War, not againſt the Prince, for that is never to be permitted, but againſt the will of the Prince? Theſe things being certain Precipices, into one of which there is a neceſſity of falling, and the Malignity of the Reigning Conſtellation being no way to be aſſwaged, what other means can they have recourſe to, but to actual force; calling to their aſſiſtance the Law of Nature, which is that of ſelf-Preſervation? What ſhould they do, but ceaſe to act as Subjects, when the King ceaſes to act as a Soveraign, and this too in ſuch things as are not within the Pale of Subjection, or the rights of Soveraigns?

The reſolution of this Caſe given by a perſon ſo ſolid and judicious, makes me believe that the Chriſtians are, in reſpect to Humane Reaſon, what the Heathen were in reſpect of the Oracles of their falſe Gods. Thoſe Oracles, deluded and impoſed upon their Conſulters, by the obſcurity and ambiguity of their Anſwers, and yet they were frequented. In the ſame manner, though Chriſtians have ſo much experience, that the decifions of Reaſon are ſo incertain, they cannot but they muſt conſult it: neither can any thing put them out of conceit with that confidence which they have in it. And yet that which renders them extraordinarily to blame, that the Oracle of the Holy Spirit, which is the onely infallible Oracle, is poſitive in theſe words, (*Jer. 17. 5.*) *Curſed be the man who truſts in himſelf, and that taketh fleſh for his arm:* that is to ſay, who relyes upon his Reaſon, and prefers the crooked and dangerous by-ways which that diſcovers to him, before the certain, ſtraight, and even paths in which the Law of God directs him. Thus we ſee that men of Wit and Parts are always floating and divided in their judgments, never uniform in their Reſolutions; while the ſimple-hearted perſon, that relyes upon God, and guides himſelf by Faith, walks with aſſurance, (*Prov. 2.*) *The way of the Lord is the ſtrength of the ſimple*, or of thoſe that are not wiſe in their own conceit. Now to apply this to our Subject; when Kings have by their Treaties ſurrendered up any Important place of ſtrength, or parted with ſome conſiderable Province, what do they that preſume upon their own conceits? They conſume and waſt themſelves in vain Arguments: They ſay that Subjects have a

right to oppoſe the Concluſion of ſuch Treaties, and that they are not obliged to act as Subjects, when Princes leave to act as Soveraigns; they meaſure the extent of Regal Power by that of their own Duties, and augment or abridge them according to the diverſity of their own thoughts and imaginations: They dive into the very Original of Soveraign Right and Priviledge, and labour to eſtabliſh and ſet up thoſe which Nature gives us. But then how does the ſimple Perſon behave himſelf? He walks in the way which the Law of God has mark'd out for him: That Law ordains him to obey the King, he does ſo; others labour to turn him out of this way by ſpecious Reaſons. They tell him the King goes about to over-turn the Fundamental Law of Monarchy, as being one of thoſe that are Regiſtred among the firſt Conſtitutions of the Government. But he believes none of their arguments, not believing himſelf to be of capacity ſufficient to make uſe of his reaſon in a matter of ſo much difficulty. He onely knows that Humane Reaſon is very deceitful, and that the Law of God cannot err, (*Eccleſ. c.* 33.) *The man of underſtanding giveth credence unto the Law of God, and the Law is faithful unto him.*

This carriage of the ſimple perſon, that is, of the true perſon of Worth and Honeſty, and the real Chriſtian, is not onely the moſt ſure in reference to Conſcience, but alſo the moſt juſt and rational that can be followed. For in regard that Subjects cannot underſtand the true condition of Affairs, it is impoſſible for them to judge, whether it be advantagious or prejudicial to part with a Province from the reſt of the Dominion. So that the general knowledge and ſentiments which they may have in ſuch Affairs, carry them all to Obedience. For they may know in general, that one Province may be given in exchange for another, which is nearer and more convenient; or parted withal to prevent a Bloody and tedious War; which inſtructs them, that they cannot be Judges of the Actions of their Soveraigns, without a peremptory Temerity. *It is not permitted to Subjects*, ſaith *Tacitus*, (*Annal.* 1. 6.) *to condemn the Actions of Princes, nor to ſearch into the hidden reaſons of their Conduct. The Gods have made them Arbiters of all Affairs of Rule and Empire, and have onely left to us the honour to obey.* Beſides, is there any priviledge of the Subject broken, when a Prince parts with any of his Dominions? Does the Kingdom belong to them? Is it not the Kings Inheritance? So then it is beyond contradiction, that Kings, in Hereditary Kingdoms eſpecially, have power and priviledge to alienate any part of their Eſtates; ſince it is to be preſumed, that no Prince will ever do ſuch an act, unleſs thereto compelled by an inevitable neceſſity, or that he find ſome conſiderable advantage thereby.

The oppoſition of the *French* to the Treaty which *Charles* the Sixth made with *Henry* the Fifth King of *England*, and the War which they entered into to prevent the conſequences, are proofs alleadged without any appearance of Reaſon, to evince that Subjects may ſometimes oppoſe themſelves againſt the wills of their Soveraigns. For the *French* could not be ſaid to take up Arms upon that occaſion againſt *Charles* the Sixth: neither could ſuch a Treaty be ſaid to be of any force, which was made at a time when the Prince had no power of himſelf, and which took from his Son a Crown that was his lawful Right. In ſhort, the Ambition of *Henry* the Fifth King of *England*, the Revenge of the Duke of *Burgundy*, and the averſion of Queen *Iſabel* of *Bavaria*, that were the true cauſes of that Treaty. So that there never was a juſter War then that of the French, who fought againſt the Uſurper of the Kingdom, and took part with *Charles* the Seventh, who was not onely Succeſſour, but in poſſeſſion of the Kingdom, his Father being civilly dead, and not in a condition to meddle with buſineſs.

But there are other more particular pretences that are urged by the Lovers of Noveltie, to alienate the Subject from their Prince, and warrant their Diſloyalty; Religion, Reformation of Miſcarriages in Government, and Oppreſſion of Taxes, are the moſt uſual pretences made uſe of to debauch the Subject, and allure them to Combination and Rebellion. But a Loyal Subject ought to take care of being deluded by theſe pretences, and to have always in his thoughts the ſaying of *Tacitus*, (Hiſt. *l.* 4.) *That Liberty and eaſe of the Peoples Greivances, are the ſpecious baits with which the Factious draw the unſtable Multitude to their Party.* To them then that complain againſt Subſidies and Taxes, there is this anſwer to be given, That God does not onely oblige us to obey thoſe Princes who rule their Subjects with mildneſs and gentleneſs, but alſo thoſe that Govern with Ill-husbandry, who oppreſs them, and abuſe their own Power. As for the Pretence of Reformation of Government, we are to underſtand, that there is no way to attain order by diſorder; nor muſt we procure the health and recovery of a Kingdome, by ſuch a violent and dangerous Remedy as War, which cauſes more Diſtempers and dangerous miſchiefs then thoſe which we go about to cure, or could have poſſibly endured for many years before.

The pretence of Religion is the moſt Powerful of all, and always when the Heads of the Party are perſons of Intreague and Artifice, they never fail of producing wonderful Effects. Under this Coverture it was, that the great deſigns and ambitious projects of the Houſe of *Lorrain* were conceal'd, when the Duke of *Guiſe* made that famous League againſt *Henry* the Third, and by which he got ſo much repute, and Enlarged his authority in ſo ſmall a time. For we finde it was the Continual care of the Duke of *Guiſe*, and after him of the Duke of *Lorrain*, to imprint in the Hearts of the people, by means of the Clergy who governed their Conſciences, that *Henry* the Third privately favoured the *Hugenots*; and that there might be no farther doubt of it, they reduced the King to that Condition, that he was forced to League himſelf with the King of *Navar*, with whom he was no ſooner agreed, but that fatal blow was given him at St. *Clou*'s, by the Inſtigation of the Jeſuites.

The pretence of Religion was ſo powerful, as to Engage a prodigious number of Perſons of Quality and Devotion in that League, and to kindle and enflame two great Wars in *France* and *Germany*: which came to paſs, not onely by the Induſtry of great Perſonages, driving at various deſigns, but alſo through the ignorance of the Principles of our Religion, wherein the greateſt part of Chriſtians take little care to inſtruct themſelves. For example, this is one that ought to be the perpetual rule of their Conduct: We are not to doe any evil, to procure any good, or to prevent any evil. Now for a Chriſtian to to revolt againſt his Lawful Prince, is an apparent evil, and a Crime which he ought never to be guilty of, upon the expectance of any good to come of it, nor out of fear of any dangerous diſadvantage. And we are farther to conſider, that how great ſoever the Misfortunes that threaten Us may ſeem to be, if we intend to ſtand firm to our Duty, they are all to be looked upon as inferiour to the wounds of Conſcience. This religious ſubmiſſion to thoſe whom God has ſet over us, was obſervable in the Chriſtians of the four firſt Ages, who never departed from their Obedience to the Pagan Emperours, though they were ſuch as perſecuted them with extremity of Rage; who ſought nothing but their utter Extripation, and put them to death with the moſt exquiſite Torments they could deviſe. And which is moſt wonderful, is this, that there were ſeveral who were the Domeſtick Servants of thoſe Emperours; ſome who bare conſiderable Offices and Employments in their Courts; and ſuch a conſiderable number who ventured their lives for them in their Armies, that there were above thirty thouſand at one time that ſerved under *Diocleſian*. They who were the Emperours domeſtick Servants, ſerv'd them with reſpect, affection and fidelity; and they who were liſted in their Armies, fought with no leſs zeal for the preſervation of the Empire. Inſomuch, that St. *Sebaſtian*, one of the Captains of *Diocleſians* Guard, upbraiding him for his Cruelty towards the Chriſtians, *This cruelty*, ſaith he, *doſt thou exerciſe againſt thy beſt Servants, and againſt people that continually pray for thy Proſperity, and the ſafety of thy Empire.* St. *Romulus*, Grand Maſter of *Trajans* Court, tax'd the ſaid Emperour with the ſame Ingratitude, when he Disbanded Eleven thouſand Chriſtians, and baniſhed them into *Armenia*, boldly blaming him for depriving himſelf of the ſtouteſt, and moſt faithful Souldiers in his Army.

For a farther demonſtration of this Truth, it will not be from the purpoſe, to recite the Oath which the Chriſtians took when they were liſted in the Army, as it is recorded by *Vegeſius* in theſe words. *We oblige our ſelves in the Name of God, of Chriſt, and of the Holy Ghoſt; and in the name of his Imperial Majeſty, which next to God we are bound to Honour, to be faithful to the Emperour, to obey his commands, not to depart from his Service, and not to refuſe to die when need ſhall require, for the Service of the publick Weal.*

This Form was permitted by all the Emperours, till the Raign of *Maximian Herculeſ*, who altered it, and ordained, *That all the Officers and Souldiers ſhould ſwear upon the Altars of his falſe gods, That they would fight like men of courage, againſt all Enemies whatever that ſhould oppoſe his March.* This Order was no ſooner brought to the *Theban* Legion, which conſiſted of ſix thouſand ſix hundred Souldiers, but they quitted the Camp, and removed about three Leagues off, which the Emperour underſtanding, ſent and ſummoned them to return. But St. *Mauritius*, who commanded that famous Legion, ſent back for anſwer, *That both He and his fellow-Souldiers were ready to hazard their Lives in his Service, but that being Chriſtians, they could not acknowledge as a Deity, any other than the living God, and could performe no Religious Worſhip before inanimate Idols.* *Maximian* upon this Anſwer, cauſed the whole Legion to be decimated, but that decimation effecting no change, either in the Captain, or the reſolution of the Souldiers, he ordered a ſecond decimation to as little purpoſe. So that at laſt in a great fury, he turned his whole Force upon them, and cauſed them all to be moſt inhumanely Maſſacred.

I have made this Portraiture of the Christians of the Antient times, to the end, the Christians of our days may therein behold the Condemnation of their Judgments and Proceedings; and to shew them that the *French* who made War against *Henry* the Third, because they thought him a *Hugenot*, and against *Henry* the Fourth, because he was really so, were equally culpable of High-Treason against God and Man; and to convict them that there is no difference in Religion, no Raigning Tyranny, no Interest, no Reason, no pretence can justifie Rebellion. *Wise men*, saith *Tacitus*, *patiently indure the Rule of bad Princes, as they do the bad effects of bad Constellations. And they look upon their vexation, proscriptions, poysonings, and other effects of their cruelty, as they consider Famine, Pestilence, and other epidemick Maladies, to proceed from the evil temper of the Air. It behoves us to pray to God to send us mild and just Rulers; but being once sent, we must submit with patience.*

This Obligation upon Subjects not to start from their Allegiance to their Soveraigns, is highly commended by the most zealous Protestants abroad. And among the rest, *M. de Gombaut* blames the *Rochellers*, for shutting their Gates against their King, and for constraining him to lay Siege to their Town: *They should have opened their Gates*, saith he, *to their King, and for their own relief, have onely made use of the Arms of Faith.*

Pagan Theology agrees in this point with Christian Divinity, and places the violation of that Obedience which Subjects owe their Princes, among the Crimes which the Justice of the Gods most severely punish in Hell.

Nec venti dominorum fallere dextras. Virgil, l. 6. Æneid.

God, saith *Plato*, *reserves in himself the beginning, the middle, and the end of things, condemns by his just Decrees all those who live not humbly and peaceably, but out of a mad and senceless pride, believing themselves more capable of Rule and Government, endeavour to shake off their Soveraigns yoke.*

But God having established the Thrones of Kings, to procure the publick good, and to maintain Order among Men, has not onely forbid their Subjects to revolt from their Duty, but has also declared, that the persons of Kings are Sacred, and that how unjust, violent, and cruel they may be, all attempts upon their Lives are to be abominated. *Touch not those who are consecrated to God by their holy Unction*, saith the Scripture, and consequently ought to be rever'd and reverenc'd, as partaking of Divinity. And to the end there should want nothing of that respect, which it is his high pleasure should be given to Kings, he gives us to understand, that their Honour is dear to him, and that he would not have that Honour wounded so much as in thought: *Wish the King no evil in thy thought*, saith the Preacher.

No wonder then that our Church, instructed by the Holy Spirit; I do not mean that of the Jesuits and Papists, instructed by the Spirit of Antichrist, has such a particular care of Kings, using all her Authority to preserve their Persons and Dignity. And yet to shew that the Papists would be seemingly of this Religion; when it stands with their interest, we find that the Council of *Constance*, (*Sess.* 15.) thundered out their *Anathema's* against *Jean Petit*, who endeavoured to set a foot a New Doctrine, by which he subjected the Government of Kings to the judgment of their Subjects, and exposed their Persons to their Sacrilegious Attempts. This Doctrine set on foot by the fore-mentioned *Petit*, at the instigation of the Duke of *Burgundy*, to give some colour to the Assassination of the Duke of *Orleance*, onely Brother to *Charles* the Sixth, begat such a dread among all men, that notwithstanding the power of the Duke of *Burgundy*, at that time Regent of the Kingdom, it was immediately condemned by the University of *Paris*, and the Books themselves burnt before the Church of *Nostre Dame*. One of the famous Councils of *Spain*, did Excommunicate all those that decry'd Kingly Government, or any way went about to blaspheme their dignity by defaming Libels. And indeed, we should be too tedious to repeat what might be found both in Scripture, in the Acts of Councils, and in the writings of the Holy Fathers to this purpose.

And indeed, the Obedience which we owe to God and his Church, ought without all question to oblige us to have the same veneration for Kings, to be inviolably Loyal to them, and to obey their Commands. Nevertheless, where may we find those Christians, that honour God in the persons of their Soveraigns, that are faithful to them, to acquit themselves of an obligation of Conscience, and who obey their Commands with so much diligence and exactness, as if they had received them from God himself? We do not find that real Fidelity and Loyalty is the vertue of those that make the greatest shew of it, but that they

are rather led by the desire and hope of Princes favour; that their zeal for the service of the King redoubles when they receive rewards; but grows cold, when looked upon with indifferency or contempt; and is absolutely laid aside, when they find another opportunity to better their fortunes. Which is the reason, that in all Courts, so many persons meditate nothing but Intrigues, and Cabals, and to put themselves into a condition to wrest from the Prince by force, those gratifications and rewards which they think they deserve.

In others, this Loyalty is nothing else but the fear of those punishments which Kings are able to inflict upon those that dare adventure to violate their Duties by Cabals and Factions against their Government, and by Conspiracies against their Persons. The proof whereof appears by this, That Princes who have the greatest aversion against shedding of Blood, spare not sometimes the Blood of the most considerable persons in their Kingdom, to retain others in their Duty, by such examples of their Justice.

The Loyalty of men of Judgment and Solidity proceeds from the knowledge which they have, that there is nothing so great as the power of Kings, and that the very thought of destroying them is not onely Impiety, but meer madness. For they know, that they have for their Guards an active Force, sufficient to quell the Attempts of popular Tumult, and able to prevent the embodying of any warlike Conspiracy; and that it rarely happens, that Plots and Contrivances against Princes take effect, unless the negligence of the Prince will take no warning. They know moreover, that Kings are the dispensers of all sorts of Favours, Honours, Dignities, Riches, which men so much covet; and that they have those infallible ways to reduce to their Obedience, those that shall be drawn aside; not so much out of a design of Rebellion, as to better the condition of their Affairs. Lastly, they know, that the most part of such Subjects as have so far forgot themselves, as to stand in competition with their Soveraign, have come to unfortunate ends, perished in misery, grown old in Prison, or consumed their days in opprobrious Exile.

As for the rich, who are contented with their Estates, and desire nothing farther then to enjoy the pleasures of this life, they are so much the Enemies of War, that they devote themselves to the King, as being the chief Watchmen of the City, to prevent Domestick and Forraign Enemies from disturbing their Tranquillity; and look upon him as the Titular Angel of their repose and happiness.

——*Deus nobis hæc otia fecit.*

As for the Domestick servants of Princes, that enjoy the great Employments and Dignities at Court, they can never fail in their Loyalty, without the loss of their Reputation, and ruine of their Fortunes.

Lastly, the inclination of the people, is nothing but an inclination of them, to remain in the same condition where they find themselves; and as they have the less inclination to quit that condition, the less they are sollicited; it appears that they are always equally disposed to Obedience or Disloyalty, and that their Fidelity purely depends upon opportunities and Conjunctures.

Thus it appears, that the Root of Loyalty in the generality of Subjects is very slender, since it depends upon the inclinations of the Heart of Man, changing with the wind of Interest, and receiving its birth from every alteration of the thoughts of the mind.

So that from all that has been said, we must conclude, That if we would preserve an inviolable and vertuous Loyalty towards our King, it behoves us to be bound to our lawful Prince, with the same tye that we are bound to God. That we Honour and Reverence Kings as his Lieutenants, and his living Images, as the Ministers of his Justice, and the Instruments of his Will and Commands.

FINIS.

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